ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to selective anxiolytic therapeutic agents which allow for the treatment of anxiety-related disorders with less severe side-effects, such as sedative and amnesic effects, and in particular, dependence liability. These selective agents selectively or preferentially bind the α2-$GABA_A$ receptor, as compared to the α1-$GABA_A$ receptor. Alternatively, these selective agents selectively or preferentially activate the α2-$GABA_A$ receptor, as compared to the α1-$GABA_A$ receptor. The present invention also relates to methods for identifying such selective anxiolytic therapeutic agents. The present invention also relates to methods for identifying a molecule that decreases binding of a benzodiazepine to the α1-$GABA_A$ receptor, but not substantially to the α2-$GABA_A$ receptor.